



ABSTRACT AND BIOGRAPHY

Managing Perceptions

Perceptions are constantly at work in organizations. They are responsible for reducing productivity, increasing risks, fostering confusion, destroying projects, and arresting career development. They are the main forcing function for such disasters as the Firestone Tire debacle, fall of Enron, WorldCom, Tyco International, Global Crossing and others.

The quickest way to change information about a situation is to communicate it to others. This is best demonstrated by the staff meeting, a major methodology used to disseminate directives and to gather status information. Status information has always been critical for validating directives, determining situation gaps, and developing additional 'corrective' directives. However, due to the translation caused by perceptions, this information dissemination and collection process inherently leads to considerable artificial, illusory, fraudulent, and misinformation. The results are considerable misunderstandings that lead to solutions of problem symptoms, not the real problems. Decisions based on misinformation create new problems, including further misunderstandings which lead to fear, inaction, confusion, and opportunities for severe personal interest politics. Many excellent managers and fine technicians have lost their jobs and their programs as a direct result of this daily phenomenon.

This presentation illustrates how perceptions cause serious trouble and describes a methodology for measuring and managing the "translation" challenge. With this approach, critical 'intangibles' can be made 'tangible' and dealt with effectively. Examples include dealing with change management, goal alignment, technology program utilization, employee satisfaction, project management, and productivity improvements.

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Mr. Swiger currently directs the Space and Earth Technology Services Group for Perot Systems Government Services Civilian IT Division. In this capacity, he is directly responsible for the execution of all business operations and support activities across a wide variety of research, IT, and engineering support services contracts with NASA and NOAA.

Mr. Swiger has over thirty-five years diversified IT management and operations experience spanning commercial and Government clients. Over the last 15 years, he has managed a variety of large multi-vendor Government IT and research contracts and developed and implemented partnering initiatives as well as facilitated partnering training programs for key Government clients. He also participates in executive round tables and key employee incentive programs for senior managers.